

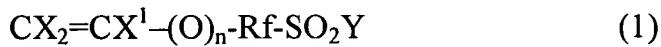
**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Withdrawn) A material for a solid polyelectrolyte; said material comprising:

a multi-segmented fluoropolymer having a fluoropolymer chain segment A containing sulfonic acid functional groups, which is a copolymer comprising:

- (a) an ethylenic fluoromonomer unit containing sulfonic acid functional groups represented by Formula (1)



wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1; and

- (b) at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit copolymerizable with the unit (a) and containing no sulfonic acid functional groups;

and a fluoropolymer chain segment B containing no sulfonic acid functional groups, the fluoropolymer chain segment B having a crystalline melting point of 100°C or higher or a glass transition point of 100°C or higher.

2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn) The material according to claim 1, wherein the at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit (b) containing no sulfonic acid functional groups comprises tetrafluoroethylene.

6. (Withdrawn) The material according to claim 1, wherein the fluoropolymer chain segment B is a polymer chain comprising 85 to 100 mol% of tetrafluoroethylene and 15 to 0 mol% of a monomer represented by Formula (3)



wherein Rf<sup>a</sup> is CF<sub>3</sub> or ORf<sup>b</sup> and Rf<sup>b</sup> is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> perfluoroalkyl.

7. (Withdrawn) The material according to claim 1, wherein the multi-segmented fluoropolymer has an equivalent weight of 400 to 1600.

8. (Withdrawn) The material according to Claim 1, comprising a multi-segmented fluoropolymer having at least two types of fluoropolymer chain segments C and D containing sulfonic acid functional groups, the fluoropolymer chain segment C having a smaller equivalent weight than the fluoropolymer chain segment D.

9. (Withdrawn) The material according to Claim 8, wherein the fluoropolymer chain segment D has a crystalline melting point of 100°C or higher or a glass transition point of 100°C or higher.

10. (Withdrawn) The material according to Claim 8, wherein the fluoropolymer chain segments C and D containing sulfonic acid functional groups are each a copolymer comprising:

- (c) an ethylenic fluoromonomer unit containing sulfonic acid function groups; and
- (d) at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit copolymerizable with the unit (c) and containing no sulfonic acid functional groups.

11. (Withdrawn) The material according to claim 10, wherein the ethylenic fluoromonomer unit (c) containing sulfonic acid functional groups is represented by Formula (1)



wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1.

12. (Withdrawn) The material according to Claim 8, comprising the multi-segmented fluoropolymer in which the fluoropolymer chain segment D has an equivalent weight of 1000 or more.

13. (Withdrawn) The material according to Claim 8, wherein the multi-segmented fluoropolymer has an equivalent weight of 400 to 1600.

14. (Withdrawn) A solid polyelectrolyte membrane comprising the multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 1.

15. (Withdrawn) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane according to Claim 14, wherein the multi-segmented fluoropolymer contains protonated sulfonic acid ( $\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ ) groups as the sulfonic acid functional groups, and has a modulus of elasticity of at least  $1\times 10^8$  dyn/cm<sup>2</sup> at 110°C or higher.

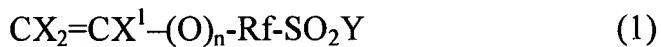
16. (Withdrawn) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane according to Claim 15, wherein the equivalent weight of the whole multi-segmented fluoropolymer is 1600 or less.

17. (Withdrawn) A multi-segmented fluoropolymer having a fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups and a

fluoropolymer chain segment B<sup>1</sup> containing no sulfonic acid functional groups, wherein:

the fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups is a copolymer having a molecular weight of 5000 to 750000 and comprising:

(e) 1 to 50 mol% of at least one type of structural unit represented by Formula (1)



wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl and OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1, and

(f) 99 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer structural unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups; and

the fluoropolymer chain segment B<sup>1</sup> is a fluoropolymer chain containing at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit and having a molecular weight of 3000 to 12000000.

18. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 17, wherein the ethylenic fluoromonomer (e) in the fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> is represented by Formula (2)



wherein Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s).

19. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 17, wherein the ethylenic monomer (f) in the fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> contains at least one ethylenic fluoromonomer.

20. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 19, wherein the ethylenic monomer (f) is tetrafluoroethylene.

21. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 17, wherein the fluoropolymer chain segment B<sup>1</sup> is a polymer chain comprising 85 to 100 mol% of tetrafluoroethylene and 15 to 0 mol% of a monomer represented by Formula (3)

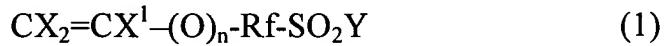


wherein Rf<sup>a</sup> is CF<sub>3</sub> or ORf<sup>b</sup> and Rf<sup>b</sup> is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> perfluoroalkyl.

22. (Withdrawn) A multi-segmented fluoropolymer having at least two types of fluoropolymer chain segments C<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups, wherein:

the fluoropolymer chain segment C<sup>1</sup> is a copolymer having a molecular weight of 5000 to 750000 and comprising:

(g) 13 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer structural unit containing sulfonic acid functional groups and represented in Formula (1)

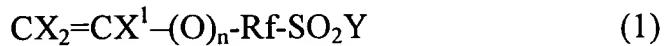


wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1, and

(h) 87 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer structural unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups; and

the fluoropolymer chain segment D<sup>1</sup> is a fluoropolymer chain having a molecular weight of 3000 to 1200000 and comprising:

(i) not less than 0.1 mol% but less than 13 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit containing sulfonic acid functional groups and represented by Formula (1)



wherein X, X<sup>1</sup>, Y, n and Rf are as defined above, and

(j) more than 87 mol% but not more than 99.9 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups.

23. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 22, wherein the ethylenic fluoromonomer (g) in the fluoropolymer chain segment C<sup>1</sup> is represented by Formula (2)



wherein Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s).

24. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 22, wherein the ethylenic monomer (h) in the fluoropolymer chain segment C<sup>1</sup> contains at least one ethylenic fluoromonomer.

25. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 24, wherein the ethylenic monomer (h) in the fluoropolymer chain segment C<sup>1</sup> is tetrafluoroethylene.

26. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 22, wherein the ethylenic fluoromonomer (i) in the fluoropolymer chain segment D<sup>1</sup> is represented by Formula (2)



wherein Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s).

27. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 22, wherein the ethylenic monomer (j) in the fluoropolymer chain segment D<sup>1</sup> contains at least one ethylenic fluoromonomer.

28. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to Claim 27, wherein the ethylenic monomer (j) in the fluoropolymer chain segment D<sup>1</sup> is tetrafluoroethylene.

29. (Withdrawn) A solid polyelectrolyte membrane comprising the multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 8.

30. (Currently Amended) A material for a solid polyelectrolyte, comprising a multi-segmented fluoropolymer that comprises a block copolymer and/or a graft copolymer,

wherein the copolymer contains one or more blocks essentially consisting of segment A and one or more blocks essentially consisting of segment B, the segment A combines with the segment B,

wherein the segment A has a molecular weight of 5,000 to 1,000,000, and  
the Segment A is a copolymer chain comprising:

(a) an ethylenic fluoromonomer containing sulfonic acid

functional groups each represented by Formula (1)



wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is Fl, Cl, or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having one or more ether bonds; and n is 0 or 1; and

(b) at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer

copolymerizable with the ethylenic fluoromonomer (a) and containing no sulfonic acid functional groups,

the segment B is a fluoropolymer containing no sulfonic acid functional groups, has a molecular weight of 3,000 to 1,200,000, and has a crystalline melting point of 100°C or higher or a glass transition point of 100°C or higher, wherein the ratio of segment A : segment B in the segmented fluoropolymer is 5:95 to 98:2 30:70 to 90:10 wt. %.

31-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Previously Presented) The material according to claim 30,  
wherein the fluoropolymer segment B is a polymer comprising 85 to 100 mol% of  
tetrafluoroethylene and 15 to 0 mol% of a monomer represented by Formula (3)



wherein Rf<sup>a</sup> is CF<sub>3</sub> or ORf<sup>b</sup> wherein Rf<sup>b</sup> is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> perfluoroalkyl.

36. (Previously Presented) The material according to claim 30,  
wherein the multi-segmented fluoropolymer has an equivalent weight of 400 to  
1600.

37. (Withdrawn) The material according to claim 8, which comprises a  
multi-segmented fluoropolymer having a block copolymer of at least two types of  
fluoropolymer chain segments C and D containing sulfonic acid functional groups,  
the fluoropolymer chain segment C having a smaller equivalent weight than the  
fluoropolymer chain segment D.

38. (Previously Presented) A solid polyelectrolyte membrane  
comprising the multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 30.

39. (Previously Presented) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane  
according to claim 38, wherein the multi-segmented fluoropolymer contains

protonated sulfonic acid ( $\text{SO}_3\text{H}$ ) groups as the sulfonic acid functional groups, and has a modulus of elasticity of at least  $1 \times 10^8$  dyn/cm<sup>2</sup> at 110°C or higher.

40. (Previously Presented) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane according to claim 39, wherein the equivalent weight of the whole multi-segmented fluoropolymer is 1600 or less.

41. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 17, which has a block copolymer of a fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups and a fluoropolymer chain segment B<sup>1</sup> containing no sulfonic acid functional groups, wherein:

the fluoropolymer chain segment A<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups is a copolymer having a molecular weight of 5000 to 750000 and comprising:

(e) 1 to 50 mol% of at least one type of structural unit represented by Formula (1)



wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> alkyl; Rf is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1, and,

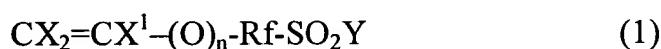
(f) 99 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer structural unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups; and

the fluoropolymer chain segment B<sup>1</sup> is a fluoropolymer chain containing at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit and having a molecular weight of 3000 to 1200000.

42. (Withdrawn) The multi-segmented fluoropolymer according to claim 22, which has a block copolymer of at least two types of fluoropolymer chain segments C<sup>1</sup> and D<sup>1</sup> containing sulfonic acid functional groups, wherein:

the fluoropolymer chain segment C<sup>1</sup> is a copolymer having a molecular weight of 5000 to 750000 and comprising:

(g) 13 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer structural unit containing sulfonic acid functional groups and represented by Formula (1)

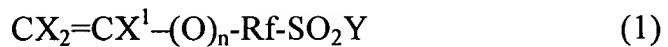


wherein X and X<sup>1</sup> may be the same or different and are each hydrogen or fluorine; Y is F, Cl or OY<sup>1</sup> wherein Y<sup>1</sup> is hydrogen, alkali metal or C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>40</sub> divalent fluoroalkylene having ether bond(s); and n is 0 or 1, and

(h) 87 to 50 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer structural unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups; and

the fluoropolymer chain segment D<sup>1</sup> is a fluoropolymer chain having a molecular weight of 3000 to 1200000 and comprising:

(i) not less than 0.1 mol% but less than 13 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer unit containing sulfonic acid functional groups and represented by Formula (a)



wherein X, X<sup>1</sup>, Y, n and Rf are as defined above, and

(j) more than 87 mol% but not more than 99.9 mol% of at least one type of ethylenic monomer unit containing no sulfonic acid functional groups.

43. (Withdrawn) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane according to claim 29, wherein the multi-segments fluoropolymer contains protonated sulfonic acid (SO<sub>3</sub>H) groups as the sulfonic acid functional groups, and has a modulus of elasticity of at least 1X10<sup>8</sup> dyn/cm<sup>2</sup> at 110°C or higher.

44. (Withdrawn) The solid polyelectrolyte membrane according to claim 43, wherein the equivalent weight of the whole multi-segmented fluoropolymer is 1600 or less.

45-50. (Canceled).

51. (Previously Presented) The material according to claim 30, wherein the at least one type of ethylenic fluoromonomer (b) containing no sulfonic acid functional groups is tetrafluoroethylene.

52. (Canceled).